

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN SA 02730 01 OF 02 102111Z
ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4560
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 2730

E.O. 11652: XGDS1
TAGS: PGOV, ES, US
SUBJECT: MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS CASTANEDA ON US-
SALVADORAN RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY. ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER CASTANEDA DISCUSSED WITH ME HIS CONCERN OVER THE "DETERIORATION" OF US-SALVADORAN RELATIONS AND WHAT COULD BE DONE ABOUT IT. CASTANEDA READ ME PORTION, DEALING WITH US, OF CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT PREPARED AT RECENT FOREIGN MINISTRY CONFERENCE TO FORMULATE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ROMERO GOVERNMENT. MOST OF DISCUSSION CONCERNED HUMAN RIGHTS WITH MAJORITY VIEW THAT CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WAS PERMANENT FIXTURE OF U.S. POLICY. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOES POLICY INCLUDED PRESENTATION OF EL SALVADOR'S BEST FACE ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, IMPROVEMENT OF INTERNAL PERFORMANCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AVOIDANCE OF CONFRONTATION AND INITIATION OF DIALOGUE WITH USG ON ISSUE, RESISTANCE OF ANY EFFORT TO INTERFERE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF EL SALVADOR AND MORE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF OBLIGATIONS UNDER AGREEMENTS FOR MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. CASTANEDA DESCRIBED RENUNCIAION OF MILITARY
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 SAN SA 02730 01 OF 02 102111Z

ASSISTANCE AS HASTY, EMOTIONAL ACTION BUT EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OUTWEIGHED BENEFITS. ALTHOUGH CASTANEDA SAID THAT PRESIDENT MOLINA ENDORSED PAPER'S RECOMMENDATIONS WE HAVE NO INDICATION WHAT ROMER'S LINE WILL BE.

2. IN A CALL ON ACTING MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

CASTANEDA ON JUNE 3 ON OTHER MATTERS, HE RAISED WITH ME HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE "DETERIORATION" OF RELATIONS BETWEEN EL SALVADOR AND THE US. CLEARLY, HE SAID, A DETERIORATION HAS OCCURRED AND WE MUST ASK OURSELVES (I.E. SALVADORAN TO SALVADORAN) WHAT WE CAN DO TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION. REFERRING TO HIS CONVERSATION WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY RODMAN, HE SAID THE LATTER HAD TOLD HIM THAT THE US WISHED TO PURSUE THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS RATHER THAN IN PUBLIC, AN ATTITUDE WHICH CASTANEDA SAID HE APPRECIATED. CASTANEDA REITERATED CONCERNS HE HAD EXPRESSED PREVIOUSLY REGARDING THE DIFFICULTY FACING CIVILIAN GOES OFFICIALS IN AFFECTING THE COURSE OF POLICY, WHICH IS MADE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY IN MILITARY CIRCLES AND OFTEN WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE BELIEVES THAT THE ONLY REAL WAY FOR THE GOES TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION IS BY IMPROVING ITS OWN PERFORMANCE INTERNALLY, BY REESTABLISHING THE RULE OF LAW AND ENFORCING GREATER RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. BUT, "BECAUSE OF THE TOTAL SITUATION" INSTEAD OF IMPROVING, THE COUNTRY IS VERY CLOSE TO BECOMING A "MILITARY DICTATORSHIP". IT IS DOUBLY DIFFICULT TO PERSUADE MILITARY DECISION-MAKERS OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE US COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS IF THEY ARE RECEIVING, OR THINK THEY ARE RECEIVING, CONFLICTING SIGNALS FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE USG, NOTABLY THE PENTAGON AND U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL. (NOTE: DATT AND MILGP PERSONNEL STATE THEY HAVE CAREFULLY FOLLOWED ESTABLISHED POLICY LINES AS SET FORTH BY AMBASSADOR, IN ALL THEIR RELATIONS.)

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PAGE 03 SAN SA 02730 01 OF 02 102111Z

3. CASTANEDA SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF RELATIONS WITH THE US HAD BEEN EXTENSIVELY DISCUSSED AT A RECENT POLICY CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING HAD BEEN TO ANALYZE THE WHOLE RANGE OF SALVADORAN FOREIGN POLICY AND PREPARE A PAPER WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INCOMING ROMERO ADMINISTRATION. PRESIDENT MOLINA AND A NUMBER OF OTHER MILITARY OFFICERS HAD ATTENDED THE MEETINGS AND MOLINA WAS PRESENT FOR THE ENTIRE DISCUSSION OF RELATIONS WITH THE US. THE PRESIDENT HAD ENDORSED THE RESULTING RECOMMENDATIONS, OF WHICH CASTANEDA OFFERED TO READ THE PORTION CONCERNING RELATIONS WITH THE US.

4. THE SECTION ON RELATIONS WITH THE US BEGINS BY DESCRIBING THE CURRENT WORLD SITUATION AS ONE OF "FLEXIBLE BIPOLARITY" IN WHICH EL SALVADOR IS CLEARLY WITHIN THE US "SPHERE OF INFLUENCE" AS OPPOSED TO THAT OF THE SOVIET UNION. WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK MOST OF

THE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION CONCERN WHAT MEASURES EL SALVADOR MUST TAKE TO ADJUST TO THE SERIOUSNESS APPARENT IN THE US DETERMINATION TO MAKE THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS A PART OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY. THERE WERE TWO VIEWS. IN THE VIEW OF A MINORITY OF THE CONFEREES, THE EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS REPRESENTED A BREAK IN US POLICY, REFLECTING THE PERSONALITY OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE COMMITMENTS HE MADE DURING HIS ELECTION CAMPAIGN. THE MAJORITY VIEW WAS THAT THE US ATTITUDE ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAS EVOLVED OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME AND REPRESENTS A PERMANENT FEATURE OF US POLICY. THE GENERAL VIEW WAS THAT THE US DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS AIMED PRIMARILY AT THE SOVIET UNION AND THAT ITS APPLICATION TO LATIN AMERICAN IS MARGINAL BUT NEVERTHELESS QUITE SERIOUS. THE U.S., THE PAPER SAID, MIGHT GO TO EXTREMES TO ASSERT ITS POSITION. SOME ADJUSTMENT IS NECESSARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 SAN SA 02730 01 OF 02 102111Z

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 SAN SA 02730 02 OF 02 102142Z

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 2730

5. THE GROUP'S POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. EL SALVADOR MUST TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT ITS BEST FACE INTERNATIONALLY, PARTICULARLY STRESSING THE COUNTRY'S CURRENT AND HISTORICAL COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

B. THE GOES SHOULD IMPROVE CURRENT PRACTICE WITH RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN EL SALVADOR.

C. THE GOES SHOULD AVOID CONFRONTATION ON THE ISSUE AND SHOULD TRY TO INITIATE A DIALOGUE WITH THE USG. FOR THIS PURPOSE, IT WAS PROPOSED THAT THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER UNDER THE ROMERO ADMINISTRATION VISIT WASHINGTON SOON AFTER THE INAUGURATION TO INITIATE SUCH A DIALOGUE.

D. THE GOES SHOULD VIGOROUSLY CONTEST ANY EVIDENCE OF INTENT TO INTERFERE IN EL SALVADOR'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND UPHOLD THE PRINCIPLES OF SOVEREIGN EQUALITY AND NONINTERVENTION.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAN SA 02730 02 OF 02 102142Z

E. THE GOES SHOULD AVOID HASTY ACTION WITH REGARD TO TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS AND CAREFULLY ANALYZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ANY ACTION ON, OR REGARDING, COMMITMENTS UNDERTAKEN, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO MILITARY OR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

6. CASTANEDA COMMENTED THE LAST POINT ABOVE WAS INTENDED TO REFER TO THE GOES' "RENUNCIATION" OF US MILITARY ASSISTANCE. HE FELT THE GOES IN RENOUNCING SHOULD HAVE DONE SO ABSOLUTELY AND COMPLETELY, AND NOT TRY IN THE CONFUSED WAY HE FELT IT WAS DONE TO SALVAGE SOME OF THE PROGRAM. THUS HE CONSIDERED THW WHOLE AFFAIR A HASTY AND ILL-CONSIDERED EMOTIONAL REACTION. THE ACTION WAS TAKEN, HE SAID, WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE FOREIGN MINISTER, HE SAID, WAS PUT IN THE "RIDICULOUS" POSITION OF HAVING TO MAINTAIN TO THE US AMBASSADOR THAT THE GOES RENUNCIATION HAD BEEN PURPOSELY VAGUE WITH THE INTENTION OF ALLOWING THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES TO DECIDE THE DETAILS OF WHICH PROGRAMS WOULD BE DISCONTINUED AND WHICH MAINTAINED. WITH REGARD TO MILITARY ASSISTANCE, CASTANEDA EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL VIEW THAT THE US HAD BEEN PARTLY RESPONSIBLE OVER THE YEARS, THROUGH THESE PROGRAMS, OF CREATING THE VERY SITUATION WHICH IS THE PROBLEM TODAY. THE ANTI-COMMUNIST INDOCTRINATION THAT THESE MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE RECEIVED IN TRAINING PROGRAMS IN THE US AND PANAMA BEAR MUCH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RIGIDITY OF THEIR ATTITUDES TODAY, HE INSISTED. IT WOULD BE BETTER, IN CASTANEDA'S VIEW, TO HAVE THESE

OFFICERS RECEIVE THEIR MILITARY TRAINING FROM EUROPEAN SOURCES AND TO EXPOSE THEM TO THE US THROUGH CIVILIAN RATHER THAN MILITARY PROGRAMS.

7. COMMENT: AN EARLIER VERSION OF THIS POLICY PAPER
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PAGE 03 SAN SA 02730 02 OF 02 102142Z

WAS SHOWN, IN ITS ENTIRETY, TO ANOTHER EMOFF (SEE JANUARY 26, 1977 MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN CASTANEDA AND POLSEC CHIEF WALKER SENT TO ARA/CEN, INR/OIL AND INR/RAA IN DEPARTMENT). IT IS CURIOUS THAT THE PRELIMINARY DRAFT CONTAINED NO MENTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, OR HOW IT MIGHT AFFECT USG-GOES RELATIONS. OBVIOUSLY, EVENTS OF THE LAST SIX MONTHS HAVE FORCED THE GOES, ESPECIALLY THE FOREIGN OFFICE, TO ADDRESS THE DETERIORATING NATURE OF EL SALVADOR'S IMAGE AND THE TENSENESS OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. THE FOREIGN OFFICE OBVIOUSLY HAS GOTTEN THE MESSAGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS. WHETHER THESE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION WILL BE ACCEPTED AS POLICY IS A QUESTION. MOLINA'S PRESENCE ALONG WITH OTHER MILITARY OFFICERS, AND HIS ALLEGED ENDORSEMENT OF THE DOCUMENT, SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS ANY INDICATION OF WHAT ROMERO'S LINE WILL IN FACT BE.

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